INTELLIGENCE Must Drive Operations

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A lesson learned again and again at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) is the central role the intelligence battlefield operating system (BOS) plays in the success of a brigade task force.

Leaders and soldiers succeed when they can accomplish their mission essential tasks under combat conditions. At the JRTC over the past year or so, the intelligence observer-controller (OC) teams have seen continued improvement in the staff work of brigade and battalion S-2 sections. After observing many S-2s during that time, the OCs have identified several keys to success, and I want to discuss some of them in this article.

The path to success lies in developing and applying sound standing operating procedures (SOPs) that are based on doctrine and on tested tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). This article outlines many of the tools and techniques that have proved successful at the JRTC. To be prepared for success against the JRTC opposing force (OP-

FOR), or an actual opponent during operational deployments, intelligence leaders may want to consider incorporating these tips into their home-station training programs.

Solid S-2 section SOPs form the basis for successful intelligence input to the brigade task force. Successful brigade and battalion S-2 SOPs observed at the JRTC have been based on current doctrine; equally important, however, is the soldier's familiarity with the SOPs. Units often arrive with excellent SOPs that they don't understand and don't use.

Readily available in most of these SOPS, for those who take the time to read them, is the 90 percent solution to the difficult problems S-2 sections will encounter during their rotation. But when leaders and soldiers have not mastered their SOPs, the good information in them is never put to use. As planning time becomes short and fatigue becomes a factor, the effect of this lost knowledge becomes severe. By D+3—if the unit has not enforced a sleep schedule—fatigue reduces memory spans and diminishes attention to detail. Tasks that section members may have done earlier without direction now require increasing emphasis from key leaders. Detailed SOPs that outline tasks and responsibilities focus sections on their essential tasks, remind tired soldiers of their responsibilities, and provide guidance to soldiers covering for others who have become casualties.

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Experience shows that effective S-2 SOPs cover six general areas:

- Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).
- Reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) planning.
- Staff integration and synchronization.
- Section operations.
- Asset integration, with emphasis on intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW) assets.
- Intelligence support to the targeting process.

While different units will address each of these areas in different ways, the following are thoughts on each, based on current and emerging doctrine and successful TTPs observed at the JRTC.

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

The IPB is a continuous four-step process of analyzing the threat and the environment in a geographic area. It sets the stage for the development of operations plans and orders and should draw on the expertise of all staff sections.

Although the IPB process can be time-consuming, many of the doctrinal products can be completed at home station as part of the IPB "homework" phase. Terrain analysis products, order-of-battle laydowns, and OPFOR doctrinal templates should be completed well before deployment. Successful S-2s have these products prepared in advance and are thoroughly familiar with them before beginning the orders process at the intermediate staging base, or at home station for units conducting airborne insertions. Unfortunately, many times these products are forgotten after the initial order is prepared. OCs find well-prepared products rolled up in the corner of a tactical operations center (TOC) or buried in the back of a vehicle. With a little updating, these products have proved to be useful throughout the unit's rotation. Yet they are typically discarded after the first order is issued.

We have to do better than this. As an S-2, you must know what you have available and then use it. During the abbreviated planning process, when time is especially limited, these IPB products become critical.

The following are the four steps to IPB:

Define the battlefield environment. This step includes a number of sub-tasks. The critical first step is for the battle staff to determine the task force's area of interest (AI). An AI, as defined by doctrine, is determined by conducting a terrain analysis and an analysis of friendly and enemy capabilities. It also includes the area of operations (AO), areas adjacent to and extending into enemy territory to the objectives of current or planned operations.

Along with other key staff members, the battle staff nominates to the commander an AI that contains all of the elements that are likely to influence the task force during the time period for which the staff is planning. There are no hard-and-fast guidelines for choosing an AI. The staff members rely heavily on their own judgment and experience and on a sound analysis of time and space factors for both friendly and enemy units. As part of the initial intelligence estimate briefing during mission analysis, the S-2 must present the AI, its characteristics, and the reasons it was chosen.

He must focus the commander on those aspects that will have the greatest effect on friendly and enemy operations. One example is enemy insurgent forces that are expected to conduct infiltrations into the unit's AO within a certain period of time. Another is the enemy situation along ground lines of communication that friendly forces must cross or use to get into the AO. A third is a key terrain feature such as a ridgeline that may provide excellent observation into the AO but is not currently controlled by the unit. This type of information gives the commander additional data to consider as he formulates his own estimate, conducts his own IPB, and begins to develop and refine his guidance.

Describe the battlefield's effects. In this second step, the S-2 must avoid the common mistake of presenting the commander and staff with large amounts of data on the battlefield without describing how the battlefield will affect and shape the fight. When done well, this step of the IPB process paints a clear picture of the opportunities and limitations the environment presents to any force operating in the AI. These effects are portrayed primarily through the modified combined obstacles overlay (MCOO) and a consideration of the factors of OCOKA—observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles and movement, key terrain, and

avenues of approach. Doctrine states that the MCOO is a combination of overlays that becomes a graphic presentation of the way the terrain affects operations, but this is not realistic at brigade and battalion level. The combination includes such overlays as hydrology, crossing sites, hot landing zones, the different aspects of terrain, and so on. At the brigade and battalion level, you need one that focuses you, the staff, and the commander on the important aspects of the terrain.

Understand how you and the enemy will fight; see the terrain and how it affects both of you. As you walk the commander and staff through the MCOO, describe the items of OCOKA. The emphasis, however, must be on key or decisive terrain and the avenues of approach, mobility corridors, and infiltration routes. Additionally, the movement rates and displacement times for both friendly and enemy forces as they move along these approaches must be addressed.

Any exacerbating or mitigating effects of anticipated weather conditions should also be addressed during this phase of the IPB process. But don't waste time with the weather. Everyone knows its hot or cold, raining or snowing. Instead, discuss the effects of illumination on night ground movement operations and the effect these will have on your own and the enemy' ability to fight at night; discuss the effects of foot mobility or vehicle mobility (wheeled or tracked) along infiltration routes or identified avenues of approach. Talk about the dewpoint in the morning, what it will be at a given time, and the ground fog that a high or low dewpoint will create and the effects it will have on aviation operations at first light. This is the type of detail a commander and an S-3 need to know.

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Finally, coordinate with the air defense artillery (ADA) officer to make sure he discusses enemy air avenues of approach during his portion of the briefing and with the task force engineer to ensure that he discusses the enemy's mobility and countermobility. Staff integration during the initial IPB process is key to getting at this enemy that our task force will face.

Evaluate the threat. In this step, be thorough, presenting the enemy situation as you see it. First, discuss the enemy's composition, without regard to weather and terrain. At this point, identify your best estimate of the forces available to the enemy, their current manning and equipment levels, and their organization. This is normally done using line and block charts, annotated with figures showing the enemy's current strength and the numbers, types, and capabilities of his weapons

In this stage of the IPB process, many S-2s get into trouble by presenting too much information. Limit your description to the forces and weapon systems that are likely to influence your unit's fight; for example, if your unit must conduct airborne or air assault force entry operations, enemy air defense systems become high-payoff targets (HPTs). If you are in the midst of search and attack operations, enemy mortars may be critical. These decisions are based on an analysis of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time). But it is your responsibility to focus the commander and staff members on the systems that present the greatest threat.

This step of the IPB can be long and detailed and may tax the staff's patience. Bringing in facts about troops and weapons that are not likely to affect the mission only makes it more difficult to hold their attention. For their part, other staff members must be patient during this phase; this is the reason they have come together. This is the enemy you are about to engage in warfare, and many lives will be lost if you don't fully understand him and the way he fights.

Remember that during this portion of the laydown, you brief the entire staff. While the discussion of threat bridging assets, for instance, may not interest the ADA officer, they are as important to the S-3 and the task force engineer as the laydown of threat air assets is to the air defenders. After detailing the enemy's forces and weapon systems, you must translate this into enemy strengths and weaknesses. This analysis should be broken down by enemy BOSs and can be displayed graphically. These charts should highlight the threat capabilities that pose dangers to friendly forces and the enemy weaknesses we can exploit.

Determining threat courses of action (COAs). The S-2 must always present the most probable COA and the most dangerous one. The basis for this projection is the S-2's current situation template and event template. Several techniques for presenting these COAs have been used successfully at the JRTC. Cartoon sketches, map enlargements, and terrain models allow the entire staff to view the COA at the same time. The most common technique, using an overlay on a 1:50,000 or 1:25,000-scale map, is quick and effective, but it is difficult with large groups of people.

Regardless of presentation technique, the entire staff and subordinate commanders must walk away from this portion of your briefing with a clear understanding of the way you think the enemy will fight. A technique that you or a brigade or battalion commander can apply is to survey staff and subordinate commanders after the briefing and ask them how they expect the enemy to fight in their AO. As OCs, we do this routinely.

For example, after sitting through an entire order, many company commanders are still not completely sure of the enemy situation in their assigned areas, and this is an important aspect to consider. If you are a brigade S-2, you need to include a level of detail that is of interest to company commanders; if you are a battalion S-2, you need to talk to the platoon leader level.

The next time you are briefing your unit's subordinate

commanders and staffs, keep in mind that a company commander does not have a staff. He has only himself, his XO, and a couple of sharp lieutenants and noncommissioned officers, many of whom have little experience.

Note that while current doctrine and many unit TTP pamphlets still say the S-2 should identify at least three enemy COAs, experience shows that this is impractical. Battalion and brigade staffs simply do not have time to evaluate and plan against three COAs, and presenting them with so many tends to muddy the clear threat picture you need to portray.

Instead, decide upon and present the most probable and the most dangerous COAs, and then be prepared to present likely enemy actions on these, when time permits. Remember too that the most probable and the most dangerous may be the same. When you believe this is the case, look for other information you may have missed. Information such as R&S reports or battle damage assessments that may have been considered overestimated earlier can now become extremely important. Try not to close any of the enemy's options; often he will select the very one you just closed.

After completing the essential products discussed so far—the MCOO, situation and event templates, order of battle charts, and threat capabilities matrices—disseminate them down to subordinate S-2s and, for battalion S-2s, to company commanders, in a usable format. Copies should also be forwarded to the next higher headquarters. Intelligence staffs often hold onto their products until subordinate staffs and commanders are well into their planning processes. This makes parallel planning difficult and almost ensures that the intelligence picture will vary at each subordinate level. While professional differences are likely between intelligence staffs at different levels, quickly disseminating products will bring these disagreements to the surface early in the planning process and help produce a common picture of the battlefield. Getting intelligence products up to the next higher headquarters lets that staff know when a subordinate unit's staff has a different, and possibly more correct, projection of enemy intentions.

Do not think the IPB process is finished at this point. New information must be analyzed constantly. Close battle tracking of new information, combined with your understanding of threat doctrine and capabilities, should result in predictive intelligence.

Remember that we are intelligence professionals, not historians. Descriptions of past actions are useful only if they contribute to your ability to predict the enemy's future activities. Too often, S-2s are not able to produce this predictive intelligence for a number of reasons. Perhaps they have not mastered their opponent's order of battle and tactics, or their sections are not accurately tracking the current battle, thus depriving the S-2s of valuable input to their threat models. Sometimes S-2s give in to a natural tendency to let down after the order is prepared and briefed. In any case, stay ahead of the enemy as well as other staff members, and try to anticipate the enemy's next action instead of reacting to his last. In the final analysis, an S-2 who must constantly react to enemy actions has failed.

One valuable technique for predictive intelligence observed at the JRTC—and reinforced through practical application by many units during Operation *Joint Endeavor* in Bosnia —is the use of pattern analysis.

Pattern analysis is based on the premise that the enemy's selected course of action results in certain characteristic patterns that may be identified and correctly interpreted. Over time (usually about five days to a month), S-2s who use good battle tracking techniques can predict such events as periods of enemy reconnaissance activity, windows of increased mortar or sniping attacks, and peak levels of civilian activity during the course of a day.

Every enemy and every battlefield develops a pattern of activity. For an elusive foe, however, we must look at each event on the battlefield and determine whether there is a unique pattern. It is up to the intelligence professionals to assess what that pattern is and what it means for future operations, both friendly and enemy.

Reconnaissance and Surveillance Planning

R&S planning is a major piece of the intelligence process at brigade and battalion levels. R&S requires more than an S-2 and a scout platoon leader sitting in an operations center, trying independently to plan and coordinate a critical combat operation. The details of R&S planning and execution require a completely orchestrated effort by the commander and the entire staff.

A thorough discussion of R&S planning and execution would require a separate article. But if you consider only the implications of the following questions, the stage will be set for a successful effort:

- Is the R&S plan based on approved priority intelligence requirements (PIRs)?
- Is the plan based on wargamed enemy courses of action?
- Are indicators developed to help the S-2 satisfy the commander's PIRs?
- Are units tasked in an operations order or fragmentary order to collect information?
- Do units understand that they are tasked to collect information for the S-2?
- Is there a system in place to track the results of the plan?
- Are units reporting as required—that is, meeting the reporting timelines as directed by the S-3 and S-2?
- Is there a system for debriefing collection assets? Does the SOP require that all collectors provide feedback to the S-2 upon completion of their missions?
- Has the S-3 included R&S taskings in paragraph three of the order, under Tasks to Subordinate Units, or are they buried in an appendix or annex?
- Has the commander been briefed on the R&S plan and given his approval?
- Is the S-2 making the most of all available assets to conduct R&S?

• Has the R&S plan been coordinated with adjacent units?

R&S remains a weak point throughout the force, and failures can usually be traced to two root causes: Units do not follow their SOPs for R&S, and commanders do not demand that R&S missions be planned as carefully as other combat missions. Commanders at the JRTC who have planned and executed R&S missions with the same level of detail as any other combat operation have achieved great success. In most cases, however, R&S operations are given less consideration in the planning products, and the results have been disappointing.

Staff Integration and Synchronization

Staff efforts at the integration and synchronization of BOSs are not working. Successful S-2s have aggressively tapped into the system or systems that a battalion or brigade task force brings to the fight, but most S-2s overlook expertise that is available inside their own TOCs. The best available source on threat BOS capabilities is usually the staff BOS representatives.

Just as the ADA officer can contribute to the S-2's portrayal of enemy ADA systems and air avenues of approach, other BOS representatives can give the best advice on threat capabilities in their areas. For example, during search and attack operations, we see the S-2 preparing a situational template and the engineer preparing an enemy minefield template independently of each other. The lack of integration by these two key staff officers causes some serious problems. One is the commander's inability to visualize the enemy as clearly as he needs to. Another is the improper use of engineer assets because the minefield template has nothing to do with the enemy situation. S-2s must actively seek out input from other BOS representatives and become familiar with the systems subordinate units bring to the battle.

A functioning staff must have this open exchange of information among its members, but this can happen only when the staff develops a solid, professional working relationship. This does not mean that all staff members must like each other; on the contrary, staff members must avoid dwelling on personalities and focus instead on addressing the commander's concerns. Although the S-2 alone cannot establish such a relationship throughout the staff, he can set a good example by remaining open to input from all staff members.

Section Operations

Section operations should be driven by solid SOPs and staff battle drills. The goal when assessing section operations is to measure the section's ability to conduct its essential tasks smoothly, without requiring so much input from key leaders and supervisors that they are distracted from the planning process.

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The following are several tasks that fall under the general heading of section operations. As you perform your self-assessment to begin planning your section's training program, ask how well your section can perform these basic but essential tasks:

- Journal maintenance.
- Request for Intelligence Information log.
- Intelligence Summary log.
- Database management.
- Information flow.
- Communications.
- Battle Damage Assessment tracking.
- Analysis.

Although the SOP should be the foundation for the way you and your personnel operate—especially when fatigue sets in and the operational tempo increases—not all section operations have to be in an SOP. Another idea is to create "Smart Cards" or checklists of the section's critical functions. These are similar to a battle drill but literally provide a soldier a step-by-step list of what to do in certain situations. Ideally, these are documents that can be put into the aviators' blue books, or similar sturdy binders, to use during tactical command post or TOC operations or during battlefield circulation. They must be easily understood and drilled during home-station training.

Your section must be functional, regardless of the circumstances; you must review your section operations SOP with your entire section. Include a discussion with your junior enlisted soldiers and NCOs. The OCs at the JRTC often find soldiers with great ideas, but nobody is asking for their help or nobody is listening.

Asset Integration and Utilization

Integrating collection assets into a task force's intelligence operations is a tough job, made more difficult by one common shortcoming: S-2s typically do not understand the capabilities of these collection systems or how they are best employed. And things will only become more complex in the future as more national level assets and products are pushed down to battalion and brigade task forces.

For these military intelligence collection systems, a whole crew of experts is only a phone call away. Talk to your supporting military intelligence company and battalion about the systems they bring to the field. MI battalions and brigades also have experts on many of these national systems. And while arranging for this valuable training, don't forget to include the S-3 and the fire support officer so they will gain an appreciation for what these systems can and cannot do.

To be successful, an S-2 must also understand the capabilities of key collection assets that do not come from the MI side of the house. First and foremost, any maneuver S-2 who does not understand how scouts function, and how difficult it is to get "eyes on" a target while avoiding detection, owes it

to his task force to spend some time in the field with the scout platoon. The lessons learned will be invaluable and of the type that cannot be learned from books alone.

Similarly, S-2s must learn the ranges, capabilities, and employment considerations of systems such as TOW and Dragon night sights and platoon early warning devices. Do you know how many mils the Q-36 counterbattery radar scans at one time? Or what types of optical systems a combat observation lasing team carries? If not, talk to your fire support officer. You must be familiar with the whole array of potential collection assets within your task force. While you will probably never thoroughly understand all of them, you must know the key planning considerations for each so you can integrate them into the task force collection effort.

Intelligence Support to Targeting

Intelligence support to targeting provides the focus the staff needs to bring all fires, lethal and non-lethal, to bear against the commander's HPTs. This support begins in the initial steps of the IPB process, where the S-2 identifies threat strengths and weaknesses and derives preliminary enemy high-value targets (HVTs) as he develops his situation and event templates. These HVTs are refined during wargaming when the S-2 plays a free-thinking, uncooperative enemy while fighting his situation and event templates against friendly COAs. Later, these HVTs form the basis of the commander's HPT list and drive the collection effort to support the *decide*, *detect*, *deliver*, and *assess* functions of the targeting process.

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The targeting and synchronization process is the subject of intense discussion and continuing debate at the JRTC. Several products and techniques are generally regarded as essential for S-2s to support the targeting and synchronization process.

The following are some key considerations as you prepare for and participate in targeting and synchronization meetings:

- Identify the enemy's HVTs before the meeting, and brief them as part of your intelligence update.
- Know what collection assets are available, their capabilities and limitations, and when they will be available.
- Be prepared to recommend HPTs on the basis of the wargaming session.
- Be prepared to state when and where you believe those HPTs will appear on the battlefield (the event template).
- Recommend which collection assets should be targeted against those HPTs.
- Go through the same thought process to determine which ones should be used to conduct battle damage assessment.
- Review what your system will be for tracking and assessing the HPT.

Additionally, be prepared for the formal meeting with a specific set of information. There are various tools to use, but the suggestion here is to have an agenda and make the meeting efficient and productive.

Successful commanders and their S-2s training at the JRTC have understood the central role intelligence plays in their units' success. The S-2's ability to visualize the enemy and project enemy courses of action have been unequivocal and clearly presented. They have not been afraid to make the hard calls and aggressively argue their points of view with other staff members, when necessary. Additionally, once they have made their best estimate of the enemy's likely future actions, successful S-2s have also been able to integrate available collection assets into an effective collection plan, focused on their commander's PIRs.

A central theme is that intelligence drives operations. Success can be achieved only through the proper application of the IPB process and the development of specific PIRs, which are tied to decisions the commander must make. An IPB, well planned and properly executed R&S missions, a complete understanding of the way intelligence leads the targeting process, and total orchestration of the staff to understand the enemy and the terrain are critical elements that everyone on the staff must know. The S-2 is no longer the sole proprietor of intelligence; intelligence is everyone's business.

The suggestions in this article cannot take the place of a bold, aggressive S-2 in charge of his task force's intelligence effort. Nor is an aggressive S-2 who cannot do these things likely to succeed against a persistent enemy such as the JRTC OPFOR. But a strong S-2—willing to make the hard calls and able to orchestrate his efforts with the rest of the staff to support the commander's plan—will be prepared for success both at the JRTC and against an actual opponent. By reviewing the points detailed here, commanders and S-2s can set themselves up for success by building on the tough lessons others have learned at the JRTC.

Comments or suggestions on this article may be sent by E-mail: flynnm@bragg.army.mil; telephone DSN 239-1635/8500 or commercial (910) 432-1635/8500.

Depending on the rotation schedule, you may not receive an immediate response, but you will receive one, and your feedback will be appreciated.

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